Culture, Child Development & Quality Care: Why It Matters in the Work We Do

Eva Marie Shivers, J.D., Ph.D.

Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change

Indigo Cultural Center, Inc.

INDIGO
CULTURAL CENTER
Using our strength in the service of our vision.

Objectives of Workshop

1. Review frameworks for culture and development

2. Introduce research findings linking culture and quality

3. Empower you to develop strategies for promoting quality and culture

Situating ourselves in our work

My working assumptions. . .

1. Culture is broad.
2. Life in the United States is not fair for everyone. Education is not neutral.
3. Everyone needs training in this area and one-time workshops aren't enough.
4. The *process* is the product.

Characteristics of culture. . .

- Learned -- it is transmitted across generations through socialization and learned through one's experiences and interactions

- Shared -- shared norms for behaviors, values and beliefs characterize specific cultural groups

- Ever-changing -- culture is associated with adaptation to the environment. As the environment changes, groups adapt to improve their ability to survive or to make maximum use of their environments.

- Universal -- everyone has a culture. We all participate in both the larger, mainstream cultures and smaller cultural groups.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Frameworks for thinking about culture. . .

- Ecological approach to development (Bronfennbrenner)
  - People develop in context
  - People participate in both macro culture and micro culture
  - Approach and relate to people with the knowledge that development and outcomes are affected by different layers of influence

Frameworks. . .

- Rogoff
  - Sociocultural Historical Perspective. . . People develop as participants in cultural communities. The nature of their participation constantly changes and cultural communities constantly change. (2000)

Frameworks. . .

- ## Garcia-Coll

  - The development of ethnic minority children cannot be judged by some universal standard, but rather must be judged in the context of children's specific ecological circumstances (1996)

  - Shifts in society and community prompts people to adapt

Frameworks. . .

Cultural responses to different types of relationships and contexts

- Families and friends
- School
- Structured activities in one's own cultural community
- Structured activities outside one's own community
- Interactions with those in helping professions

Self Reflection Exercise

Instructions:

- Fill out the worksheet by yourself. . .
- Reflect on how your culture impacts the way you view:
  - Priorities for children
  - Priorities for families
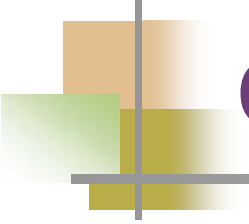 - Your role in the lives of children

Please answer the following self reflection questions:

1. What is your cultural identity?

2. Where did your family originate?

3. When did your family immigrate to the US? Why did they come here?

4. What are some of the values, beliefs and behaviors associated with your cultural heritage?

5. What are some words of wisdom passed on to you?

6. When do you say "no" to a child?

7. How are children disciplined in your family?

8. When does a baby become a "child"?

9. What are some childrearing practices that shock or appall you?

10. Who would you ask or where would you go for parenting advice?

Cultural Sensitivity: Key Strategies

- How do we create an environment of inclusion in our agencies and schools? (e.g., governance and decision-making)

- How do we make our program and classroom practices more culturally inclusive? (e.g., curriculum content and intervention strategies)

- How can we be inclusive of diversity while working in our classrooms and programs? (e.g., relations)

Let's talk about "cultural competence"

1. Competence infers that there are a group of people who are "<u>incompetent novices</u>" and a group of people who are "<u>experts</u>"

2. Competence also infers that there is such a thing as reaching a level of cultural competence and then being able to put this learning aside.

Walking the tightrope:

Balancing collective meanings and individual processes

1. Learn as much as possible about the unique customs, rules, rituals, and/or norms for particular ethnic groups. This can be perceived as "content knowledge."

2. Use the concept of "cultural attunement" as a way of being in relation with "other."

5 Main Themes in Working Towards Attunement. . .

1. Acknowledge the pain of oppression
2. Engaging in acts of humility
3. Acting with reverence
4. Engaging in mutuality
5. Maintaining a position of "not knowing"

Reflecting on our own practice. . .

- In my work, how do I relate to others when differences arise?

- What taken-for-granted assumptions am I eager to make in the name of efficiency, time constraints, and stereotyping others?

- How do I bridge the differences between ethnic background, class differences, professional helper and client?
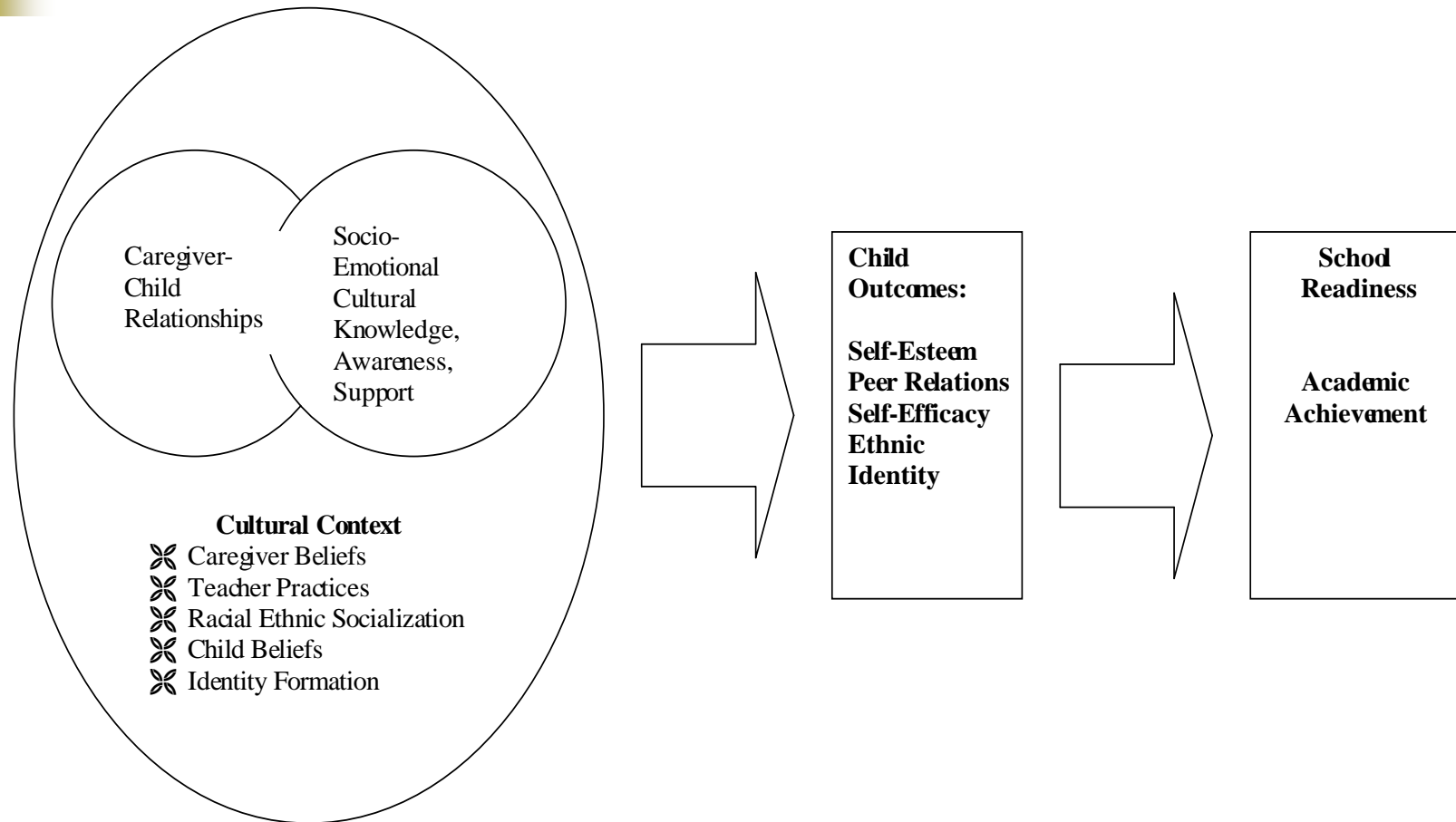
Group Discussion Exercise. . .

"What if. . .?"

Research on culture & child care

Proposed Framework: Socio-Emotional Cultural Development

Caregiver-Child Relationships

Socio-Emotional Cultural Knowledge, Awareness, Support

Cultural Context
- Caregiver Beliefs
- Teacher Practices
- Racial Ethnic Socialization
- Child Beliefs
- Identity Formation

Child Outcomes:

Self-Esteem
Peer Relations
Self-Efficacy
Ethnic Identity

School Readiness

Academic Achievement

Predicting Teacher-Child Relationships in Culturally Diverse Child Care Classrooms

Eva Marie Shivers, J.D., Ph.D.
Institute for Child Development Research &
Social Change
Indigo Cultural Center, Inc.

Carollee Howes, Ph.D.
University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Education

Literature Review

Early relationships predictor of school success (Howes, Hamilton & Phillipsen, 1998)

Children and teachers have distinct patterns of socialization and behavior that are shaped by respective cultural community (Rogoff, 2003)

Implications of home-school cultural continuity and relationship formation (Gomez, 1993; Irvine, 1990)

Purpose

Our purpose was to predict positive teacher-child relationships within racially and culturally diverse child care centers.

Research Question

Is the quality of teacher-child relationships different for children and teachers who are matched in racial/ethnic heritage?

Participants: Children

N =170
Age range = 13 months - 5.8 years old
Mean age = 36.2 months

- 51% Latino; 18% African American; 18% White; 9% Asian-Pacific Islander

- 56% spoke Spanish-only at home

- 15% spoke mix of English and Spanish at home

- 1/3 of Asian children spoke only an Asian language at home

Participants: Teachers

N = 62
49% Latino; 23% African American; 22% White; 4% Asian
94% female; 6% male

Match with teacher:
   Overall 45% of children matched
   African American children = 71%
   Latino children = 60%
   White children = 45%
   Asian children = 0%

Procedure

- Naturalistic observations of child-teacher dyad as the child enters a child care classroom for the first time.
- Ratings of teachers' initial perceptions of children
- 6 months later . . .
  - Same naturalistic observations of dyad, and assessment of teacher-child attachment relationships.

Findings

Regression analysis suggests that:
On the average, children who shared an ethnic/racial heritage with their caregivers were able to form more secure attachment relationships with their teachers.

Findings cont'd:

Children who did <u>not</u> share an ethnic/racial heritage with their teacher <u>and</u> engaged in more conflictual interactions with their peers were <u>least</u> likely to form secure attachment relationships.

Conclusion

Children who demonstrated conflict with peers were less likely to form positive relationships with teachers.

It appears that being from the same cultural community seemed to serve as a positive motivator of relationship formation.

For some teacher-child dyads, the teacher's initial experience of a child as problematic predicted a less positive future relationship.

Implications

Interactional misfits between children of color and their teachers may indicate a lack of "cultural synchronization" (Irvine, 1990). May account for the relatively poor performance of children of color and English language learners.

Misfit between teachers and children could cause teachers to misjudge children of color -- assessing them to have more serious school adjustment problems, fewer competencies, and poorer educational prognoses than white children (Ray, Bowman & Brownell, 2006).

NCEDL Best Practices Project
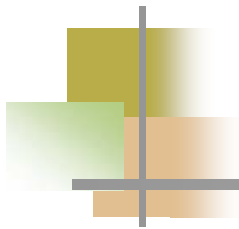
Carollee Howes, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

Department of Education

UCLA

Co-Authors: Alison Wishard, Eva Marie Shivers, & Sharon Ritchie

Hypothesis of study. . .

- Different pathways to Quality - informed by cultural communities

Procedures. . .

- 36 high quality child care programs in Los Angeles county (n = 226 children)
- Followed children from age 2 to 3rd grade
- Naturalistic observations
- Interviews with teachers & directors
- Assessments with children (literacy & math)

Findings

- Our biggest findings came when we analyzed our data by teacher-child ethnic match!

Findings from Paper A: Teacher Practices

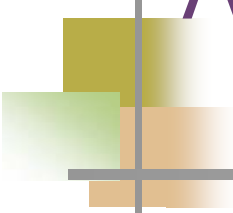| Teacher Practices	F (5,221)	Eta^2	Pairwise comparison (p =.05)
Cultural practices			
Home	7.14**	.14	L-L, AA-AA > AA-L
American	7.99**	.15	AA-L > L-L, AA-AA, W-W, W-AA
Multiculturalism	2.86*	.06	W-AA > AA-AA
Learning practices			
Child Initiated	5.12**	.10	L-L > AA-AA, AA-L
Scaffold	2.70*	.06	AA-L > L-L
Directly Teach	7.58**	.15	AA-AA > L-L, W-W, AA-L, W-AA

Findings from Paper B: Beliefs About Families

<u>Categories</u>	F (5,148)	Eta^2	Pairwise comparison (p =.05)
Deficient	19.30**	.35	L-L > AA-L, L-AA > AA-AA
Families know best	8.81**	.20	AA-AA > L-L, AA-L, L-AA
Culturally adaptive	3.93**	.10	AA-AA > L-AA
Parent education	13.60**	.26	L-L > AA-AA, AA-L
Parent partnerships	10.71**	.26	AA-L > L-L, L-AA > AA-AA
Hands off	49.04**	.59	AA-AA > L-L, AA-L, L-AA

Discussion. . .

- How do these findings inform our definition of quality?

- Are *practices* distinct from quality?

- How do these findings make us think about preparing teachers to work in diverse settings?

Ways of Caring: Examining Racial Socialization Practices and Emotional Availability among African American FFN Providers

Eva Marie Shivers, J.D., Ph.D.

Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change

Indigo Cultural Center, Inc.

INDIGO
CULTURAL CENTER
Using our strength in the service of our vision.

Study Rationale. . .

- What are unique aspects of FFN care as distinct from more formal child care arrangements? e.g.,cultural continuity

- What is the role of racial-ethnic socialization in children's emotional development?

Literature Review. . .

- Children's daily experiences in child care is deeply rooted in social-historical-cultural values of their specific community (Rogoff, 2003).

- Communication to children about race and culture are a common childrearing practice in families of color.

- Racial socialization has been associated with greater cognitive skills in younger children (Caughy et al., 2002) and academic achievement in adolescents (Hughes & Chen, 1999).

- Socialization of racial pride is associated with fewer reported behavior problems, which can indirectly affect children's success in school (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981).

Research Questions. . .

1. What are the associations between provider characteristics and caregiving practices with children?

2. Specifically, what is the contribution of Afrocentric childrearing beliefs to children's emotional development?

Methods. . .

Participants:

- 45 low-income African American FFN child care providers in the greater Pittsburgh area
- Children in their care between the ages of 12 - 60 months

Procedures:

- 3-4 hour naturalistic observation in provider's home
- Followed by unstructured "interviews" (standardized surveys)
- Incentives - $20.00 and a big bag of toys and books.

Beliefs About Racial-Ethnic Socialization. . .

3 Patterns Emerged: (Factor Analysis (PCA), 46% variance explained)

1. "Black Pride/Preparation for Bias"
2. "Society is Fair/Integration is Good"
3. "Strength in Spirituality"

Beliefs About Racial-Ethnic Socialization. . .

Predictors:

Higher endorsement of "Society is Fair" belief =

- lower provider emotional well-being (mental health) (-.38*)
- lower perceived resources(-.44*)

Beliefs About Racial-Ethnic Socialization. . .

Associations with Outcomes:

Higher endorsement of "Society is Fair" belief =

- lower emotional availability scores (-.42*)
- lower responsive involvement (-.45*)
- lower positive language interactions (-.50*)
- lower positive affect (-.52**)

Factor #2
"Society is Fair/Integration is Good"

Black children will learn more if they go to white school	.67
You have to work twice as hard as whites to get ahead	.66
Black children improved self esteem if go to school with white children	.57
Too much talk about racism will prevent you from goals	.54
Racism isn't as bad as it was before 1960's	.52
Religion important part of life	.44
American society is fair toward Black people	.41
Black children don't have to know about Africa to survive	.41

Discussion. . .

- Role of racial socialization -- links to resources - consistent with other literature (Williams, 1999), Higher income and better educated African Americans perceive more prejudice and discrimination than do their lower income counterparts.

- Pittsburgh's social/historical context: Neighborhoods vary in racial composition and in patterns of intergroup relations. Ethnic-racial socialization may vary according to aggregate characteristics of neighborhoods.

- How can we explain the association between racial socialization and relationship outcomes?

Findings raise more questions!

- How can information about caregivers' attributions help us outreach and design programs that are sensitive to their ways of thinking about children?

- Are specific modes of racial-ethnic socialization forms of resiliency for some young children?

- What explains the connection between cultural messages and emotional development?

Findings raise more questions!

- How does the community and neighborhood context impact children's development?

- How do findings about racial-ethnic socialization inform our definition of quality care?

Culturally responsive programs share 3 important components:

1. Curriculum is based on children's daily lives
2. Activities incorporate children's home language
3. Activities encourage children to learn about their family and home culture

Culturally responsive early childhood professionals demonstrate the following qualities:

1. Deep sense of respect
2. Awareness of own culture
3. Ability to maintain cultural integrity
4. Knowledge of other cultural practices
5. Understanding of the history of cultures in the United States
6. Ability to get accurate information about the families and cultures
7. Ability to avoid assumptions
8. Belief that other perspectives are equally valid
9. Skills needed to critique existing knowledge base and practices
10. Ability to take another perspective
11. Open, willing, and able to adapt and try new behaviors
12. Good problem-solving skills
13. Ability to tolerate ambiguity, conflict, and change

How can teachers learn to work effectively with other cultures?

1. Get to know families and identify their strengths.
2. Build partnerships with parents.
3. Interact with children in culturally congruent ways.
4. Provide culturally consistent care.
5. Work to reduce cultural conflicts between home and school.
6. Differentiate problem behavior from a culturally different pattern of behavior.
7. Incorporate children's home language into the classroom.
8. Help children develop strong cultural identities.
9. Invite families to share their culture with the school.
10. Recognize the contribution of children's home culture.
11. Strengthen families by connecting them to the neighborhood and community.
12. Participate in community cultural events.

Gaps in knowledge base. . .

- Effect of culture and diversity training on teachers' practices

- Effect of specific practices on children's outcomes

- Effect of pre-service higher education initiatives on teachers' practices

- Impact of classroom cultural interventions

Some thoughts about families & culture. . .

- Historical community context
- Political context
- Parents' ethno-theories about child development
- Culture, class & risk

Council Proposal Wish-List Exercise. . .

- Professional development programs
- Reflective supervision projects
- Leadership development programs
- Working with families (family support)
- Learning from families
- Assessment for children
- Neighborhood-level programs
- ELL's transition to Kindergarten programs

Thank You!!!

These are exciting times, full of opportunities and challenges. . .

INDIGO
CULTURAL CENTER
Using our strength in the service of our vision.

Questions? Email Dr. Shivers: eshivers @indigoculturalcenter.com